



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
NIH News
 National Institutes of Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 14, 2005

**National Institute of Allergy and
 Infectious Diseases (NIAID)**
<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>

Media Contact: Linda Joy
 (301) 402-1663
ljoy@niaid.nih.gov

NIAID Funds Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI)

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, today announced funding to establish the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI). Barton Haynes, M.D., of Duke University has been selected to lead the CHAVI consortium. The consortium may receive more than \$300 million over seven years, \$15 million of which is designated for its first year. In its first year, CHAVI will develop an expansion plan that will undergo scrutiny by an external advisory group. CHAVI's mission is to address key immunological roadblocks to HIV vaccine development and to design, develop and test novel HIV vaccine candidates.

"Despite a wide variety of approaches to HIV vaccine development by some of the world's best scientists, we have not yet found a successful vaccine," says Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of NIAID. "CHAVI will be a key component of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise that was proposed in 2003. With this award, we are expanding the enterprise of HIV vaccine development beyond high-quality but separate research projects to a high-quality cooperative and collaborative research system."

Approximately 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS globally, and the rate of new HIV infections continues to exceed 13,000 per day, according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. Although AIDS drugs have extended the lives of many in wealthy nations, an effective HIV vaccine would be an extremely valuable addition to the comprehensive prevention strategies necessary to halt the spread of HIV in both developing and developed countries.

In addition to Dr. Haynes, the CHAVI senior scientific leaders include Norman Letvin, M.D., of Harvard Medical School, Joseph Sodroski, M.D., of Harvard Medical School, George Shaw, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine, and Andrew McMichael, M.D., of Oxford University, Oxford, UK. These leaders will be responsible for the overall scientific work conducted by CHAVI. They will direct CHAVI research in their own labs and may also form research partnerships between CHAVI and other academic and industrial labs around the world.

CHAVI will focus on

- Understanding what happens in the earliest stages of HIV infection and what events take place in the immune system soon after HIV enters the body. Scientists know little about these events because identifying individuals at the earliest stages of infection has been extremely difficult.
- Using new research tools to determine how the immune system of the macaque monkey fends off SIV, the macaque equivalent of HIV. This will be a large study, and before now, resources for such a study have not been available. Scientists expect to gain valuable information from this macaque study that could help in designing vaccines to protect humans from HIV.

- Designing, developing and testing improved HIV vaccines that can stimulate enduring immune responses, particularly at the body's mucosal surfaces (those found at the entryways) and in the blood.
- Evaluating promising HIV vaccine candidates in small-scale clinical trials.

CHAVI's research activities will be supported by five cores. David Goldstein, M.D., of Duke University will lead the Host and Viral Genetics Core; Myron Cohen, M.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will lead the Acute HIV-1 Infections Network Core; Stephen Harrison, Ph.D., of Harvard Medical School will lead the Structural Biology Core; Raphael Dolin, M.D., of Harvard Medical School will lead the Clinical Core; and Dr. Letvin of Harvard, also a senior scientific leader, will head the Vaccine Production Core. The CHAVI researchers will actively engage in national and international partnerships with academic, clinical and industrial labs.

Almost two dozen prominent HIV vaccine researchers and public health officials, including Dr. Fauci and other NIH scientists, called for the creation of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise in a June 2003 commentary in *Science* magazine. The Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise was endorsed by world leaders at a G-8 summit in June 2004. Today, the Enterprise is a virtual consortium of independent organizations committed to accelerating the development of a safe and effective preventive vaccine for HIV/AIDS through the creation and implementation of a shared strategic scientific plan, mobilization of resources, and greater coordination among HIV vaccine researchers worldwide.

NIAID established CHAVI in response to recommendations of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, and its goals are linked to the goals of the Enterprise. It is the first Enterprise initiative to be funded by one of the G-8 nations. "Our new CHAVI consortium has been called an 'exceptional engine for advancement.' Now it is up to us—the CHAVI leadership and HIV vaccine researchers more broadly—to provide the fuel of ideas required to significantly advance HIV vaccine development," says Margaret I. Johnston, Ph.D., assistant director for HIV/AIDS vaccines at NIAID.

More information on CHAVI is provided in an online Q&A (<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/Newsroom/Releases/chaviqa.htm>).

NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIAID supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illness from potential agents of bioterrorism. NIAID also supports research on transplantation and immune-related illnesses, including autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies.

References:

1. Klausner RD, Fauci AS, Corey L, *et al*. The need for a global HIV vaccine enterprise. *Science*, 2003. 300(5623):2036-9.
2. Coordinating Committee of the Global HIV/AIDS Vaccine Enterprise. The global HIV/AIDS vaccine enterprise: scientific strategic plan. *PLoS Medicine* 2(2): e25 (2005).

News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
is a component of the National Institutes of Health,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

